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in both places is perfectly clear : an obligation which devolves equally upon a number is not likely to be exactly fulfilled, as each of those upon whom the obligation rests will rely upon another for its performance. What Petronius means by his proverb is not so clear. I presume that it intends to express the idea that the affairs of the person referred to did not prosper, because he had partners in business (perhaps the "liberti" just before mentioned), upon whom he relied, although a "pot of comrades boils badly." But whatever be the sense in which the proverb of Petronius be applied, there can be no doubt that it is identical with that in the Babylonian Talmud. Another question is whether it was originally Aramaic or Latin. If the latter is the case, then the Latin proverb, like many another Latin saying, found its way from the Romans to the Jews, and has been accidentally preserved only among the Babylonian Jews. If, however, the proverb is originally Aramaic, and Babylon is its fatherland, then we may assume that it was early carried as far as Italy by freed slaves, or by veterans who had served on the Euphrates, and that it became a household word in those lower strata of the people from whom Petronius drew both the material and the phraseology of his accurate description. To my mind the second supposition seems the more probable. In either case, the age of the Talmudic proverb is increased by several centuries (Petronius died 66 A.D.).

Another phrase from the *Cena Trimalchionis* may here be cited, to which there are interesting analogies in the Talmud. Page 110, l. 7, of Friedländer's edition, we read, "Nunc populus est, domi leones, foras vulpes." Comp. *Baba Kamma*, 117a (Jochanan) : ארי שאמר : נעשה שועל, and the proverb (מתלא) quoted in *J. Sanhedrin*, 22b, by way of antithesis to Mishnah, *Aboth* IV. 20, הוי ראש לשועלים ולא זנב לאריות. Here also the proverb appears to be of Oriental origin, and to underlie the phrase in Petronius.

W. BACHER.

Was Homer Acquainted with the Bible?

To this question all Homeric scholars—whether they advocate the theory of the old blind poet having composed both the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, or that of the works so called being merely a patchwork of popular legends strung together—will no doubt reply in the negative. Whilst some of them are willing to admit striking parallels in language and ideas between the Greek epic and the Bible (cp. Gladstone's *Juventus Mundi*), yet no critic of any standing has ever gone so far as to assert that the one work copied from the other. Although

the Talmud speaks of ספרי המירוס ("Books of Homeros"), there is so much dispute as to the real signification of this phrase that we cannot learn anything definite about the contents of those "Books."

About the end of the seventeenth, and the beginning of the eighteenth centuries, there came into vogue a system of explaining the mythologies, the sacred writings, and the monuments of ancient nations, as the Egyptians, Assyrians, Greeks, Chinese, etc., by a reference to the Bible. Most ingenious efforts were made to demonstrate that all the wise men among these peoples of antiquity had gone for their knowledge to the fountain-head of all wisdom. To prove that Hercules and Joshua were the same person was a favourite pastime with some scholars, although these writers were quite as earnest about their theories as Dr. Ignaz Goldziher is when he tries to show that Hercules and Samson are only different forms of the sun myth. One French Abbé, in 1779, wrote an elaborate work, in which he derives nearly every name of the heathen philosophers and poets from the Hebrew, and to every important narrative in the Scriptures he finds a parallel in the Vedas, or in the Egyptian histories, or in the legends of ancient Greece, which, in the Abbé's view, is a distinct proof that these wise men learned all they knew from the Scriptures. Thus Abraham and Brahma are identical, whilst the wife of the first patriarch, Sara, is the same as Brahma's consort, Sara[swati].

But one of the most ingenious, and it might be added, amusing, attempts to substantiate this strange theory, is to be found in a Latin work by a Dutch Quaker, Gerard Croese, written about 1704. This writer strove to prove that the works of Homer were nothing more than an adaptation into Greek verse of the narratives of the Bible, with sundry additions by the poet's own hand. For this purpose, he intimates his intention in his preface of taking the Iliad and Odyssey, book by book, and pointing out the striking resemblances to Biblical phrases and ideas. He begins with the Odyssey in Volume I., but never, apparently, reached the end of that work, nor dealt fully with the Iliad, for reasons we know not, the British Museum Catalogue cynically remarking, "No more volumes were published." We have, then, only one short volume from which to learn Croese's method of proving that Homer was fully acquainted with the Bible and with the Hebrew language.

"But how could Homer have gained this knowledge," asks the author "in the first place?" That he lived about the year 927 B.C. is the first thing Croese strives to show. He was contemporary according to our author's computation with King Omri of Israel. The Israelites

¹ See JEWISH QUARTERLY REVIEW, III.

in taking possession of the Holy Land had expelled the Canaanite nations, and in all probability, says Croese, the Canaanites before they left Palestine had become acquainted with the Bible from their Jewish conquerors. From Palestine the heathen tribes wandered to Thrace and Asia Minor, and it was in Smyrna that Homer must have learned to know some descendants of these fugitives from Palestine. "Not alone Homer," adds our author, "but also Lycurgus, Pythagoras, Solon and Plato also drank from the Jewish well of wisdom, as can be conclusively proved." Having laid this hypothetical foundation, Croese begins to erect his theory upon it, by asserting that the Trojan War is only a replica of the contest between the Israelites under Joshua and the Canaanites. The Trojans are the latter, whilst the Achaians and the Israelites are identical. "Now," the author triumphantly exclaims, "all difficulty in understanding the Homeric poems will vanish, seeing that I have furnished the key to unlock the secrets of the works of the Hebrew-Greek bard." The name Homer is derived from =אֹמֵר "the speaker, the teller of narratives" and the poems were called אֹמֶר "the narration." The original author did not call his works "Iliad and Odyssey," these names were added later by Pisistratus. Now it is remarkable that Pausanias calls Homer τυφλος ἀνθρω, which does not mean, as is generally understood, "the blind man," but is connected with טפל "to frame words," hence "the writer of narratives" (אֹמֵר).¹

After thus proving that the author's name is a Hebrew word, Croese brings numerous other examples of Greek names, not in the Homeric poems, as purely Hebrew. Hesiod is undoubtedly partly a Hebrew name, being derived from חֶשֶׂה and ὥδη "a counsellor in song." All the heroes in the legend of the "Search for the Golden Fleece" are Jews. Jason is יָעִין, צִוֵּן, "to feed and to counsel;" Peleus from פֶּלֶס "to weigh;" Argonaut from אֶרֶץ and אָנִי "the purple ship" which goes to Europe אֹרֶא "the light of the face") from Hellas ("to shine" הֵלֵל carrying the Danai (דִּין "judge"), and which, steered by the helmsman Tiphys (תִּפְשׁ "to draw along"), on its journey passes the islands of Kume (קוֹמֶה "to arise") and Samos (שָׁמִים "heaven"—why not שָׁמֶשׁ "the sun?") The family of Esau settled in Thrace, and thus the Greeks of that part had learned Hebrew. To prove this idea, our author tells us that the name Thrace is from θρίξ "the hair;" and was not Esau a "hairy" man?

¹ The name contains further an allusion to the fact that the author "Omer" = אֹמֵר lived in the days of King Omri.

But to return to Homer, Croese first selects a few passages from the *Iliad* before he turns to deal exhaustively with the *Odyssey*. Achilles, from אכל "to eat," "the all-devourer") exclaims in his answer to Chalcas (*Iliad* I. 87), "No man while I live and behold light on earth *shall lay violent hands* upon thee among the hollow ships," this is similar to *Exod.* xxiv. 11, "and upon the nobles of the children of Israel he *laid not his hand*." In *Iliad* I. 459, the priest of "far-sighted" Apollo, Chryses, thus prays to his divinity—"Thou hast honoured me . . . and now fulfil this my petition:" so also Saul (1 *Sam.* xv. 30), "Yet honour me, I pray thee . . ." In the introduction to the Muse (מוֹסֵר "instruction"), Achilles is described as one (I. 4, 5) who "gave their bodies to be a prey to the dogs and birds," similar to David's defiant speech to Goliath (1 *Sam.* xvii. 46) " . . . and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth." In line 10, we read, "and he (Apollo) sent a plague among the people, and the people perished," just as in 2 *Samuel* xxiv. 15, "So the Lord sent a pestilence upon Israel . . . and there died of the people . . . seventy thousand men." The Myrmidons of Achilles derive their name from מוֹרֵר מוֹעֵר, "rebelling and stumbling." Apollo is derived from עֶפֶל "tower"; Zeus is from יָהּ, "this one is the Ens, the existing one." Mercury from מַעֲרֹכָה (but how about Hermes?) Juno from יוֹנָה "a dove;" Iris from אֵוֶר "the light;" Pallas from פֶּלֶא "wondrous:" Athene from אֶתֶן "strong"; the residence of the Homeric deities, Olympus, derives its name from אֶהְלִים, פּוֹשׁ, "to be numerous in tents."

The very name of the father of Ulysses is Hebrew; Laertes is derived from לָאָה, יָרַם, "weary and cast away." Ithaca from עֹתָק, ("strong"), is the country of Ulysses, and his son Telemachus (either from תְּלִי, מֵאֵחוֹ, "holding the quiver," or from תְּלֵה, מֵחֵץ, "hanging and crushing") is famed for being a young hero (ἥρως from עֲרִיץ "powerful"). In the Third Book of the *Odyssey*, Telemachus, accompanied by the goddess Athene in the disguise of Mentor, arrives at the house of Nestor, who describes to him how he had escaped from the Trojan war, and had reached home in safety. This, says our author, is nothing but a veiled imitation of the Biblical relation, how the two angels in the form of men came to Sodom (= Pylos of the *Odyssey*), where they found Lot (= Nestor), who tells them of his rescue from the war between Amraphel and the King of Sodom, with their confederates (in an earlier portion of the book Croese has said that the Trojan war was the struggle between the Israelites and the Canaanites). In the fifth and sixth books we again follow the fortunes of Odysseus, whom Croese has now resolved to identify with

none other than Jacob. This, in spite of the fact that Telemachus, the son of Odysseus, lived in the time of Lot. Odysseus arrives at the country of the Phaeacians (*i.e.*, Padan Aram) after passing by the Jardonos (which our author identifies with the Jordan) where he sees Nausicaa playing ball near a river. The Phaeacians are the sons of Anak (thus פנאנכי=פנאיכי, the 'נ having been elided; the original word פנאנכי is the same as בני ענק, the ב and פ being interchangeable). These sons of Anak lived in Padan Aram, and their ruler was Alcinoous (על יקום, "exalted in property"), *alias* Laban. Rachel, whom Homer calls Nausicaa (from נאח, נאח, "a fair woman, gentle as a roe"; for this metaphor cp. Song of Songs ii. 9), meets Jacob (=Odysseus) and conducts him to her father's court. It is true that Jacob-Odysseus does not marry Rachel-Nausicaa, whilst the Jacob of the Bible does marry Rachel, but such a slight discrepancy is of no moment. Again, Odysseus had been away twenty years from the time he set off to the siege of Troy until he returned home to Ithaca, and similarly the stay of Jacob with Laban was about twenty years. When Odysseus comes to the Cimmerian land on the border of the ocean, he sees the ghosts in Hades, and meets several with Hebrew names. Persephone (from פנין, פרץ, "rebellious in countenance"); Minos, who is probably, says Croese, the same as Abraham (from מאה נוי, "flourishing for a hundred years"); Deucalion (דק עליון, "small yet exalted"); Heracles the strong (from הרך לץ, "the one who scoffs for a long time"); Orion (from אור, "the light"); Agamemnon (from אמנן, אמנ, "the pool of Amnon), who had just come from Thebes (either from תעבה, "abomination," or תבה, "the ark"); all these Israelites, and many others, he meets standing by the river Styx (the original form of this word, says Croese, was, undoubtedly, Syx, or Tsyx, or Tsys, from the Hebrew צית, "to kindle").

In this way, by finding phrases in the Greek that are to be met with in the Bible, by deriving Greek names from the Hebrew, by comparing the theology of the two sources, Gerard Croese fully convinces himself that not only did Homer know the Bible, but even interwove certain of its narratives with his poems. It is a pity that Croese never issued his second volume on the Iliad, but the extracts from his commentary on the Odyssey here given provide sufficient answer to the question that heads this note.

MICHAEL ADLER.